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(54) **GOLF BALL HAVING MULTI-LAYER CORE WITH FILLER IN OUTER CORE**

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A63B 37/00 (2006.01)

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CPC ***A63B 37/0064*** (2013.01); ***A63B 37/0003*** (2013.01); ***A63B 37/0039*** (2013.01); ***A63B 37/0059*** (2013.01); ***A63B 37/0062*** (2013.01); ***A63B 37/0065*** (2013.01); ***A63B 37/0066*** (2013.01); ***A63B 37/0075*** (2013.01); ***A63B 37/0076*** (2013.01); *A63B 37/0043* (2013.01); *A63B 37/0045* (2013.01); *A63B 37/0046* (2013.01); *A63B 37/0047* (2013.01); *A63B 37/0061* (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC A63B 37/0039; A63B 37/0059
USPC 473/373, 374, 377
See application file for complete search history.

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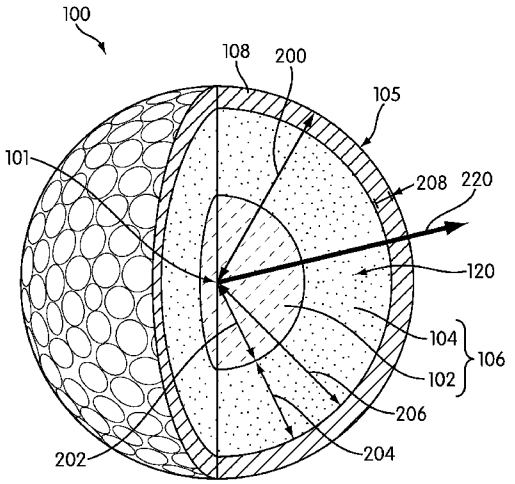
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A golf ball includes an inner core and an outer core, both made of highly neutralized acid polymers. The inner core does not substantially include any fillers, while the outer core does include fillers. The outer core may include fillers in an amount of from about 17.% to about 30.7% by weight. The filler may be barium sulfate. The core made from the inner core and the outer core may have an unexpectedly higher coefficient of restitution.

13 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets



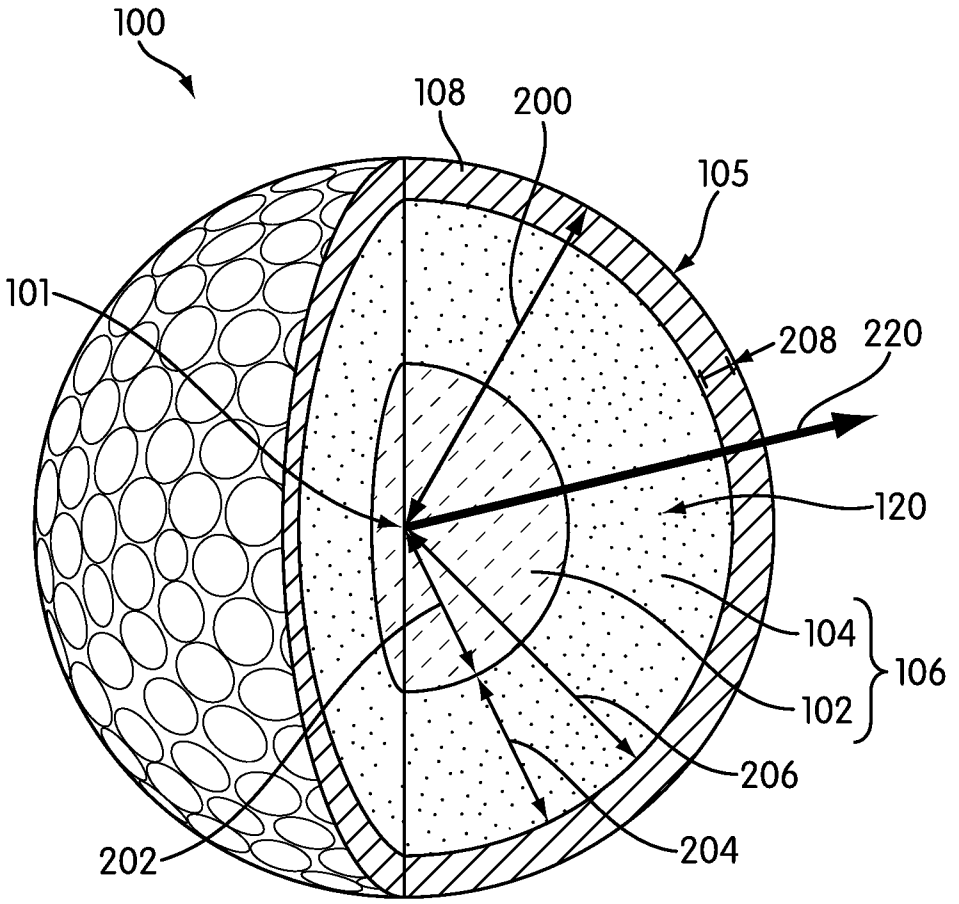


FIG. 1

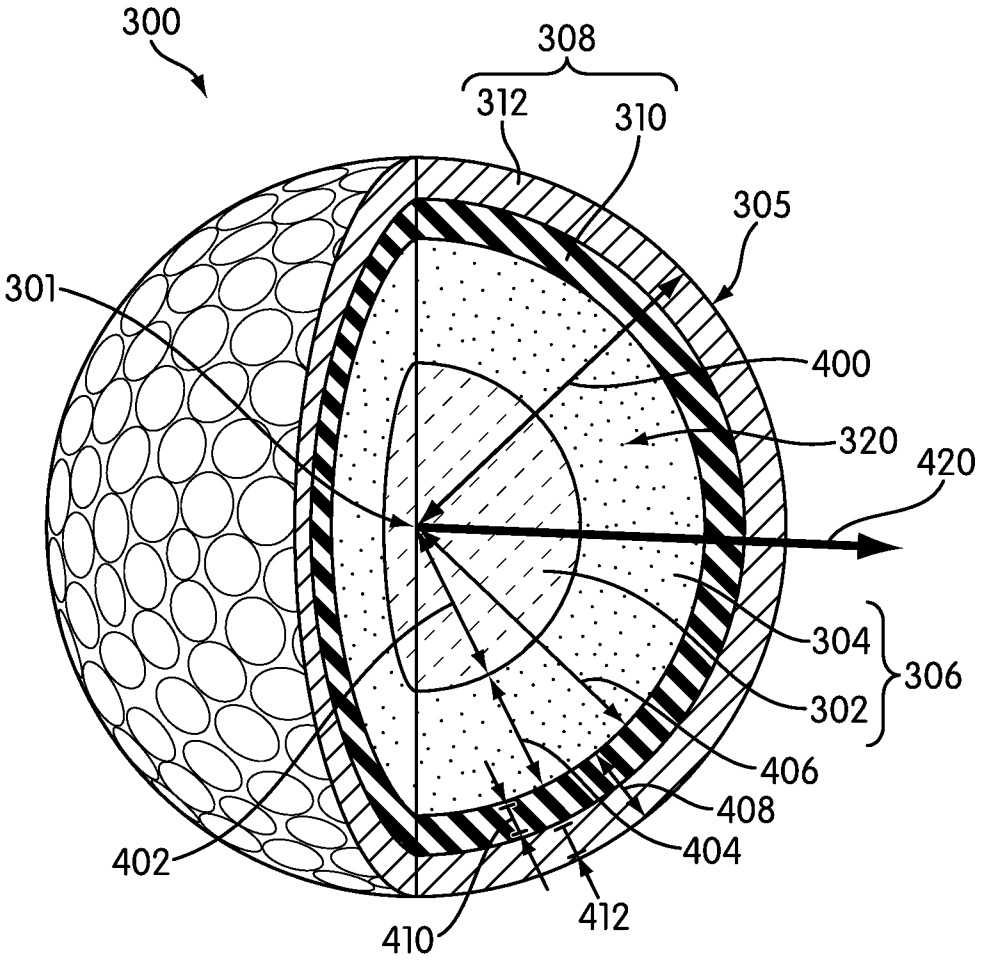

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FIG. 2

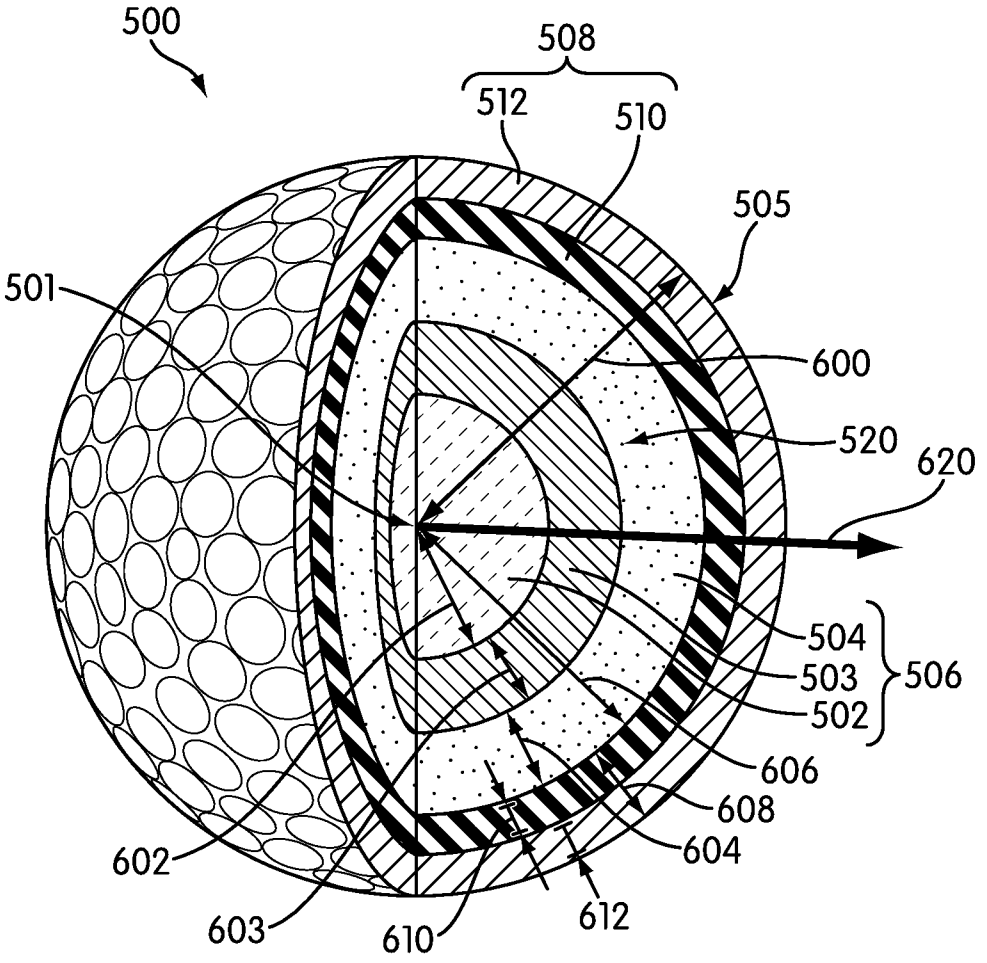
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FIG. 3

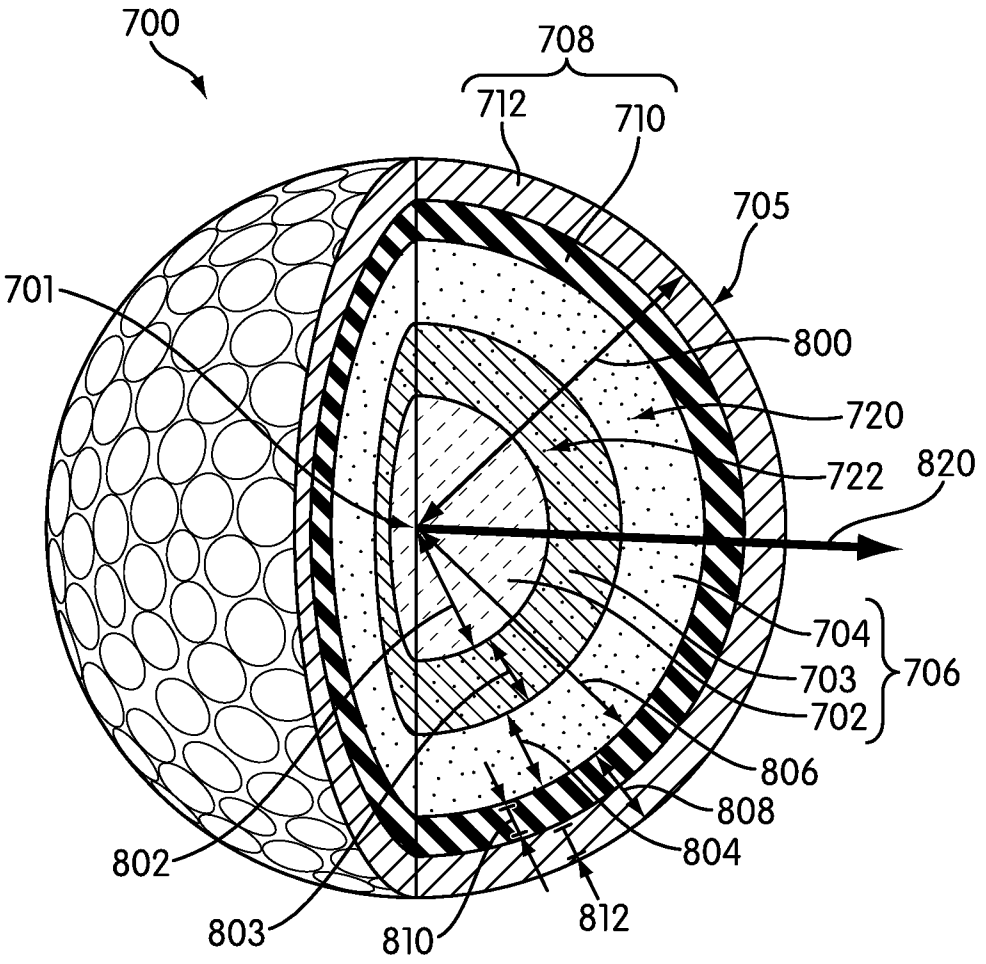
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FIG. 4

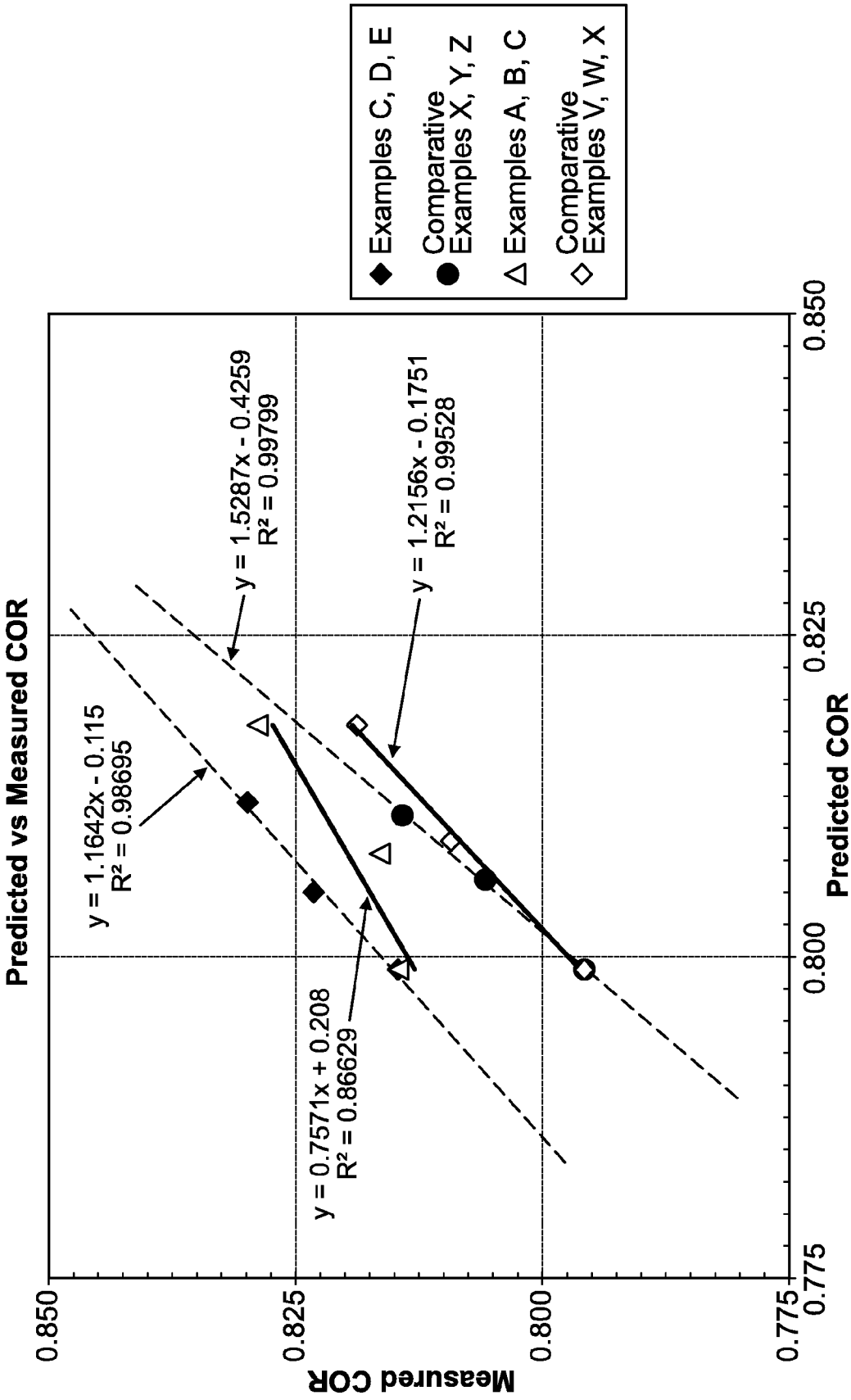
Examples C, D, E
Comparative Examples X, Y, Z
Examples A, B, C
Comparative Examples V, W, X
y = 1.1642x - 0.115
R² = 0.98695
y = 1.5287x - 0.4259
R² = 0.99799
y = 1.2156x - 0.1751
R² = 0.99528
y = 0.7571x + 0.208
R² = 0.86629
Predicted vs Measured COR
Measured COR
Predicted COR
0.850
0.825
0.800
0.775

FIG. 5

GOLF BALL HAVING MULTI-LAYER CORE WITH FILLER IN OUTER CORE

BACKGROUND

1. Field of the Invention

The present disclosure relates generally to golf balls. Specifically, this disclosure relates to golf balls that include an inner core formed from a highly neutralized acid polymer, and an outer core that is also formed from a highly neutralized acid polymer, where the inner core does not include substantially any fillers but the outer core does include fillers.

2. Description of Related Art

Modern golf balls are known to be made from a variety of polymer materials. The material making up a golf ball may affect the golf ball's performance characteristics in several ways. For example, the selection of the material for use as a golf ball may affect the golf ball's coefficient of restitution, initial velocity off the tee, feel, durability over time, and other properties.

Suitable known materials for use in a golf ball include thermoset materials, such as rubber, styrene butadiene, polybutadiene, isoprene, polyisoprene, and trans-isoprene. Known materials also include thermoplastics, such as ionomer resins, polyamides or polyesters, and thermoplastic polyurethane elastomers. Suitable materials also include polyurea compositions, as well as other materials.

In particular, ionomers are often used for to form the various structural components of known golf balls. For example, ionomers such as Surlyn™ available from E.I. DuPont de Nemours & Company are known to be used for cover layers of golf balls. Other types of ionomers, generally referred to as highly neutralized acid polymers, may also be used in golf balls.

Specifically, highly neutralized acid polymers are known to be used as the material for a golf ball core. For example, U.S. Pat. No. 6,756,436 to Rajagopalan et al., entitled "Golf Balls Comprising Highly-Neutralized Acid Polymers" and filed Apr. 9, 2002, discloses golf balls having highly neutralized acid polymer cores. The disclosure of this patent is hereby incorporated by reference. Other conventional highly neutralized acid polymers are generally disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 7,652,086 to Sullivan et al., entitled "Highly-neutralized Thermoplastic Copolymer Center for Improved Multi-layer Core Golf Ball" and filed Feb. 3, 2006, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference.

In some known golf ball constructions, a multi-piece golf ball may include both an inner core and an outer core. For example, U.S. Pat. No. 7,468,006 to Sullivan et al. discloses a golf ball having an inner core and an outer core. In particular, this patent teaches that one layer is made from a relatively soft highly neutralized acid polymer composition, and another layer is made from a relatively hard highly neutralized acid polymer composition. The disclosure of U.S. Pat. No. 7,468,006 to Sullivan et al. is hereby incorporated by reference.

The compositions of an inner core and outer core, or other layers of the golf ball, may be manipulated to achieve desired effects. For example, U.S. Pat. No. 7,651,415 to Ladd et al. discloses a golf ball with a core, intermediate layer(s), and cover layer(s) having a density gradient in its inner layers. The density of the innermost layer can be lowered with a density reducing filler, while outer layers include a density increasing filler. The disclosure of U.S. Pat. No. 7,651,415 to Ladd et al. is hereby incorporated by reference.

The selection of material(s) in the core, as well as the golf ball's overall construction, may affect the coefficient of restitution ("COR") in particular. As is widely known, the COR of a golf ball is a measure of how efficiently the golf ball transfers kinetic energy. A high COR value means that, when the golf ball is struck by a golf club, the golf ball transfers more of the kinetic energy of a golf club into forward movement by the golf ball. A high COR value may achieve advantageous play characteristics such as an increased initial velocity, or an increased total distance.

Therefore, there exists a need in the art for a golf ball having an increased COR that may also incorporate the advantages of using highly neutralized acid polymers to form an inner and outer core.

SUMMARY

Generally, this disclosure relates to golf balls constructed from a highly-neutralized polymer inner core and a highly neutralized acid polymer outer core, where the inner core includes little if any fillers while the outer core includes fillers. As a result of this construction, the golf ball may achieve advantageous effects of having an increase coefficient of restitution.

In one aspect, this disclosure provides a golf ball, the golf ball comprising: a center core, the center core comprising a first highly neutralized acid polymer; an outer core layer, the outer core layer substantially surrounding the center core and comprising a second highly neutralized acid polymer; and a cover layer, the cover layer substantially surrounding the outer core layer; wherein the center core is substantially free from filler, and the outer core layer contains at least 15% by weight filler.

In another aspect, this disclosure provides a golf ball, the golf ball comprising: a core, the core comprising an inner core consisting essential of a first highly neutralized acid polymer, and an outer core layer substantially surrounding the inner core and consisting essential of a second highly neutralized acid polymer composition and a filler; and a layer, the cover layer substantially surrounding the core; wherein the inner core contains less than about 0.01% by weight filler; and the outer core layer contains from about 17.0% to about 30.7% by weight $BaSO_4$ filler, and from about 69.3% to about 83.0% by weight of the second highly neutralized acid polymer.

In yet another aspect, this disclosure provides a golf ball, the golf ball comprising: a core, the core comprising an inner core and an outer core; the inner core consisting essential of a first highly neutralized acid polymer and less than about 0.01% by weight filler, the inner core having a diameter of from about 0.751 inches to about 1.266 inches, a specific gravity of about 0.96 g/cm^3, a compression value of from about 110 to about 170, and a Shore D hardness value of from about 37 to about 41; the outer core substantially surrounding the inner core, and consisting essential of from about 69.3% to about 83.0% by weight of a second highly neutralized acid polymer and from about 17.0% to about 30.7% by weight $BaSO_4$ filler; the core having a diameter of about 1.5 inches, a specific gravity of from about 1.09 to about 1.13 g/cm^3, a compression value of from about 87 to about 112, and a Shore D hardness value of about 43; and a cover layer, the cover layer substantially surrounding the core.

Other systems, methods, features and advantages of the invention will be, or will become, apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art upon examination of the following figures and detailed description. It is intended that all such additional systems, methods, features and advantages be included within this description and this summary, be within the scope of the invention, and be protected by the following claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention can be better understood with reference to the following drawings and description. The components in

the figures are not necessarily to scale, emphasis instead being placed upon illustrating the principles of the invention. Moreover, in the figures, like reference numerals designate corresponding parts throughout the different views.

FIG. **1** shows a first representative golf ball in accordance with this disclosure, the golf ball having an inner core, an outer core, and a cover layer;

FIG. **2** shows a second representative golf ball, having an inner core, an outer core, an inner cover layer, and an outer cover layer;

FIG. **3** shows a third representative golf ball, having an inner core, an intermediate core, an outer core with fillers, an inner cover layer, and an outer cover layer;

FIG. **4** shows a fourth representative golf ball, having an inner core, an intermediate core with fillers, an outer core with fillers, an inner cover layer, and an outer cover layer;

FIG. **5** is a graph of measured COR versus predicted COR for several example cores in accordance with this disclosure, and comparative examples.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Generally, this disclosure relates to golf balls that include an inner core formed from a highly neutralized acid polymer that does not substantially include fillers and an outer core formed from a highly neutralized acid polymer that does include fillers. The core (including the inner core and outer core) made in this way may have an unexpectedly high COR value.

As used herein, unless otherwise stated, certain material properties and golf ball properties are defined as follows.

The term "hardness" as used herein is measured generally in accordance with ASTM D-2240. The hardness of a material is taken as the slab hardness, while the hardness of a golf ball component is measured on the curved surface of the molded golf ball component. When a hardness measurement is made on a dimpled cover, hardness is measured on a land area of the dimpled cover. Hardness units are generally given in Shore D unless otherwise indicated. Measurements of the hardness of an inner core, or outer core, herein are made on the curved surface of that component.

The "coefficient of restitution" or "COR" is measured generally according to the following procedure: a test object is fired by an air cannon at an initial velocity of 40 m/sec, and a speed monitoring device is located over a distance of 0.6 to 0.9 meters from the cannon. After striking a steel plate positioned about 1.2 meters away from the air cannon, the test object rebounds through the speed-monitoring device. The return velocity divided by the initial velocity is the COR.

The "flexural modulus" is measured generally in accordance with ASTM D-790.

The term "compression deformation," or just "compression," as used herein indicates the deformation amount under a force. Specifically, the compression deformation is the deformation amount under a compressive load of 130 kg minus the deformation amount under a compressive load of 10 kg.

The "Vicat softening temperature" is measured generally in accordance with ASTM D-1525.

Except as otherwise discussed herein below, any golf ball discussed herein may generally be any type of golf ball known in the art. Namely, unless the present disclosure indicates to the contrary, a golf ball may generally be of any construction conventionally used for golf balls, such as a conforming or non-conforming construction. Conforming golf balls are golf balls which meet the Rules of Golf as approved by the United States Golf Association (USGA). Golf balls discussed herein may also be made of any of the various materials known to be used in golf ball manufacturing, except as otherwise noted.

Furthermore, it is understood that any feature disclosed herein (including but not limited to various embodiments shown in the FIGS. and various chemical formulas or mixtures) may be combined with any other features disclosed here, as may be desired, in any combination, sub-combination, or arrangement.

FIG. **1** shows a first embodiment of a golf ball in accordance with this disclosure. Golf ball **100** is a three-piece golf ball. Namely, golf ball **100** includes: inner core **102**, outer core **104**, and cover layer **108**. Inner core **102** and outer core **104** may collectively be referred to as core **106**. Golf ball **100** may have radius **200** that extends from center **101** to outermost surface **105**. In various embodiments, radius **200** may have a value such that golf ball **100** is conforming to USGA standards, or may have another value.

Inner core **102** may be the innermost structural layer of golf ball **100**, that includes center **101** of golf ball **100**. Inner core **102** may therefore be substantially spherical. Inner core **102** may have radius **202**. Radius **202** may have a value of from about 0.3755 inches to about 0.633 inches. In other words, inner core **102** may have a diameter of from about 0.751 inches to about 1.266 inches.

Outer core **104** may substantially surround inner core **102**. That is, outer core **104** may be located radially outward from inner core **102** and be adjacent thereto. Outer core **104** may have thickness **204**. Generally, core **106** may have a radius **206**. In some embodiments, radius **206** may be equal to about 1.5 inches. Thickness **204** may therefore have any value that sums to about 1.5 inches in conjunction with radius **202** of inner core **102**.

Inner core **102** and outer core **104** may be made from certain materials in order to achieve desired material properties and desired COR values. In some embodiments, inner core **102** and/or outer core **104** may be made from polymer materials. Specifically, inner core **102** may include a first highly neutralized acid polymer. Inner core **102** generally may include no substantial amount of fillers. For example, inner core **102** may include less than about 0.1% by weight fillers, or less than about 0.01% by weight fillers, or substantially 0.0% by weight fillers. Inner core **102** may consist essentially of the first highly neutralized acid polymer, or may consist of only the first highly neutralized acid polymer.

Outer core **104** may comprise a second highly neutralized acid polymer, while also comprising fillers. For example, outer core **104** may comprise at least about 15% by weight fillers **120**, or at least about 17% by weight fillers **120**, or from about 17% to about 30.7% by weight fillers **120**. Amounts of fillers **120** that are significantly less than 15% by weight may be insufficient to achieve the desired effects in the desired magnitudes. Amounts of fillers **120** that are significantly more than 30.7% by weight may run into limitations based on USGA rules regarding the total mass of the golf ball (in embodiments where the golf ball is a regulation golf ball meeting USGA requirements), or other concerns such as a decrease in COR or a decrease in durability. The preferred amount of filler **120** present in outer core **104** may also be affected by the physical properties of other structural components of the cover ball. For example, a preferred amount of filler **120** may be affected by the relative sizes of radius **202** of inner core **102** and thickness **204** of outer core **104**. As another example, a preferred amount of filler **120** may be affected by the specific gravity of the cover layer **108**.

In some embodiments, outer core **104** may comprise from about 69.3% to about 83.0% by weight highly neutralized

acid polymer. Outer core **104** may consist essentially of the second highly neutralized acid polymer and the filler, or may consist of only the second highly neutralized acid polymer and the filler.

Generally, the first highly neutralized acid polymer and the second highly neutralized acid polymer may be the same or different. In some embodiments, the first highly neutralized acid polymer and the second highly neutralized acid polymer may be the same type of highly neutralized acid polymer. In other embodiments, they may be entirely different types of highly neutralized acid polymers. Either or both of the first and second highly neutralized acid polymer may also comprise a mixture of two or more types of highly neutralized acid polymers. For example, two types of highly neutralized acid polymers may be mixed in any general ratio, such as 25:75 or 50:50, to form either or both of the first and second highly neutralized acid polymers.

Generally, a highly neutralized acid polymer is a type of ionomer. An ionomer is generally understood as any polymer material that includes ionized functional groups therein. Ionomeric resins are often ionic copolymers of an olefin and a salt of an unsaturated carboxylic acid. The olefin may have from about 2 to about 8 carbon atoms, and may be an alpha-olefin. The acid may be an unsaturated monocarboxylic acid having from about 3 to about 8 carbon atoms, and may be an alpha, beta-unsaturated carboxylic acid. Commonly, ionomers are copolymers of ethylene and either acrylic acid or methacrylic acid. In some circumstances, an additional comonomer (such as an acrylate ester, i.e., iso- or n-butylacrylate, etc.) can also be included to produce a terpolymer. These ionomers may be referred to as ethylene/(meth)acrylic acid ionomers, and ethylene/(meth)acrylic acid/alkyl(meth)acrylate ionmers respectively. A wide range of ionomers are known to the person of ordinary skill in the art of golf ball manufacturing.

When a large portion of the acid groups in the ionomer is neutralized by a cation, the ionomer material may then be considered to be a highly neutralized acid polymer. Generally, such a polymer is considered highly neutralized when at least 70% of the acid groups are neutralized by a cation. In various embodiments, the highly neutralized acid polymer may be neutralized to at least 75%, at least 80%, at least 85%, at least 90%, at least 95%, at least 98%, at least 99%, or substantially 100%. The cation may be any suitable cation source, such as the alkali metals and alkaline cation metals, particularly magnesium, sodium, zinc, or potassium.

Highly neutralized acid polymers are widely known in the art of golf ball construction. Suitable highly neutralized acid polymer compositions may include HPF resins such as HPF1000, HPF2000, HPF AD1027, HPF AD1035, HPF AD1040 and mixtures thereof, all produced by E. I. DuPont de Nemours and Company.

Inner core **102** and outer core **104** may be formed via any process known to be used with highly neutralized acid polymers. For example, either or both of inner core **102** and outer core **104** may be formed by a fabrication method such as hot-press molding or injection molding. When inner core **102** is manufactured by injection molding, the temperature of an injection molding machine may be controlled to be between 195° C. to 225° C.

Fillers are also known to be used in golf ball construction. For the purposes of this disclosure, a filler is any non-polymeric material that is added to a polymer in order to change one or more physical properties of the polymer.

Suitable additives and fillers for use in a highly neutralized acid polymer composition may include, for example, blowing and foaming agents, optical brighteners, coloring agents, fluorescent agents, whitening agents, UV absorbers, light stabilizers, defoaming agents, processing aids, mica, talc, nanofillers, antioxidants, stabilizers, softening agents, fragrance components, plasticizers, impact modifiers, acid copolymer wax, surfactants; inorganic fillers, such as zinc oxide, titanium dioxide, tin oxide, calcium oxide, magnesium oxide, barium sulfate, zinc sulfate, calcium carbonate, zinc carbonate, barium carbonate, mica, talc, clay, silica, lead silicate, and the like; high specific gravity metal powder fillers, such as tungsten powder, molybdenum powder, and the like; regrind, i.e., material that is ground and recycled; and nano-fillers. Suitable melt flow modifiers include, for example, fatty acids and salts thereof, polyamides, polyesters, polyacrylates, polyurethanes, polyethers, polyureas, polyhydric alcohols, and combinations thereof.

In particular embodiments, the filler may be used to change the specific gravity of the material. Such fillers may be referred to as density-adjusting fillers. Density adjusting fillers may include zinc oxide, barium sulfate, calcium carbonate, or magnesium carbonate. Metal powder, such as tungsten, may also be used as a filler to achieve a desired specific gravity. In some embodiments, barium sulfate ($BaSO_4$) in particular may be used. Barium sulfate has CAS number 7727-43-7, and is commercially available from a variety of chemical companies. The filler as discussed above may therefore comprise barium sulfate, consist essentially of barium sulfate, or consist only of barium sulfate, in various embodiments.

In some embodiments, inner core **102** does not include substantially any type of filler, while outer core **104** includes at least a desired amount of any type of filler. In other embodiments, the filler which is present in outer core **104** but is not present in inner core **102** may be a specific type of filler. For example, inner core **102** may include substantially zero amount of a density-adjusting filler, while outer core **104** may include density-adjusting fillers, in particular. In such embodiments, inner core **102** may therefore include fillers other than density-adjusting fillers so long as inner core **102** does not substantially include any density-adjusting fillers. For example, inner core **102** may include a coloring agent, so long as inner core **102** does not substantially include substantially any density-adjusting fillers. Outer **104** may therefore include density-adjusting fillers in the desired amounts, and may also include other types of fillers additionally.

As a result of the above compositions, specifically the arrangement of filler and lack thereof, inner core **102** and outer core **104** may have any of various desired physical properties.

First, core **106** and its subcomponents inner core **102** and outer core **104** may have desired specific gravity values. For example, inner core **102** may have a specific gravity of from about 0.95 g/cm^3 to about 1.05 g/cm^3. In other embodiments, inner core **102** may have a specific gravity that is less than about 1.00 g/cm^3, or a specific gravity that is about 0.96 g/cm^3. Outer core **104** may generally have a specific gravity of from about 1.05 g/cm^3 to about 1.25 g/cm^3. Accordingly, core **106** may have a specific gravity of from about 1.09 g/cm^3 to about 1.13 g/cm^3.

These specific gravity values may result from the presence of a heavy density-adjusting filler in outer core **104**, while inner core **102** is substantially free from the heavy density-adjusting filler. As a result, golf ball **100** may have a moment of inertia **220** that is greater than it would otherwise be without this arrangement of fillers. Moment of inertia, also referred to as "MOI" in the art and herein, is a measure of the resistance to twisting about a central axis. The higher the MOI of an object, the more force will be required to change the

object's rotationally velocity. Conversely, the lower the MOI, the less force will be needed to change how fast the object rotates.

For example, golf ball **100** may have a moment of inertia **220** of from about 82 g*cm^2 to about 90 g*cm^2. Moment of inertia **220** as shown in FIG. **1** indicates that golf ball **100** has a high moment of inertia because more of the mass of golf ball **100** is located more towards the surface **105** of golf ball **100** than towards the center **101** of golf ball **100**, due to the lack of filler in inner core **102** but the presence of filler in outer core **104**.

Next, core **106** and its subcomponents may have desirable compression values. For example, inner core **102** may have a compression value of from about 110 to about 170. Core **106** may also have a compression value of from about 87 to about 112.

The arrangement of fillers discussed above may also result in core **106** and its subcomponents having certain hardness values. For example, inner core **102** may have a Shore D hardness value of from about 37 to about 41. Core **106** may also have a Shore D hardness value of about 43. In some embodiments, inner core **102** may have a first hardness value, core **106** may have a second hardness value, where the second hardness value is at least about 2 Shore D greater than the first hardness value.

Each of inner core **102** and outer core **104** may have a highly uniform hardness. For example, inner core **102** may have a Shore D cross-sectional hardness difference between any two points on the cross-section of inner core **102** that is within +/−6 Shore D units, or within +/−3 Shore D units. Outer core **104** may also have a Shore D cross-sectional hardness difference between any two points on the cross-section of inner core **102** that is within +/−6 Shore D units, or within +/−3 Shore D units. The uniform hardnesses in these layers may lead to greater predictability of performance for the golfer.

The coefficient of restitution of core **106** may also be affected by the arrangement of fillers. Specifically, the presence of fillers **120** in outer core **104** combined with the substantial absence of fillers in inner core **102** may result in core **106** having an unexpectedly high COR value. In some embodiments, core **106** may have a COR value that is from about 0.815 to about 0.830.

More particularly, core **106** may have an actual measured COR value that is greater than a predicted COR value. The predicted COR value for core **106** may be calculated according to any of a variety of methods. In a particular embodiment, the predicted COR value of a two-piece core (such as core **106**) having an "inner" component and an "outer" component may be calculated according to the following formula:

$$\text{Predicted } COR = \frac{\text{Volume inner}}{\text{Total Volume}} * COR \text{ inner} + \frac{\text{Volume outer}}{\text{Total Volume}} * COR \text{ outer} \quad \text{(Formula 1)}$$

In Formula I, the total volume of the core is the sum of the volume of the inner component and the volume of the outer component. The "COR inner" is determined by measuring the COR of the material making up the inner material, namely by measuring a uniform sphere of the material having a diameter of (for example) 1.55 inches under the same COR testing conditions (for example, 125 ft/sec). The "COR outer" is measured in the same manner with respect to the material making up the outer component.

In some embodiments, the COR of core **106** may be at least about 1% greater than the predicted COR. In other embodiments, the COR of core **106** may be at least about 2% greater than the predicted COR.

Golf ball **100** also includes cover layer **108**. Cover layer **108** may substantially surround outer core **104**. That is, cover layer **108** may be located radially outward from outer core **104** and adjacent thereto. Generally, cover layer **108** may be manufactured from any suitable material, such as Surlyn® or thermoplastic polyurethane, that is commonly used for golf ball covers. As shown in FIG. **1**, cover layer **108** may have thickness **208**. Thickness **208** may generally have any value. If golf ball **100** conforms to USGA rules requiring a total diameter of not less than 1.680 inches, then thickness **208** may have any value that compliments the above discussed values of the diameter of core **106**.

FIG. **2** shows a second embodiment of a golf ball in accordance with this disclosure. Golf ball **300** is a four-piece golf ball. Namely, golf ball **300** includes inner core **302**, outer core **304**, inner cover layer **310**, and outer cover layer **312**. Inner core **302** and outer core **304** may collectively be referred to as core **306**, while inner cover layer **310** and outer cover layer **312** may collectively be referred to as cover layer **308**.

Golf ball **300** includes radius **400** that extends from center **301** to outer surface **305**. Each component may also have the dimensions as shown in FIG. **2**. Namely, inner core **302** may have radius **402**, outer core **304** may have thickness **404**, core **306** may have radius **406**, inner cover layer **310** may have thickness **410**, outer cover layer may have thickness **412**, and cover layer **308** may have thickness **408**.

Golf ball **300** may be substantially similar in many respects to golf ball **100**, discussed above. The compositions of inner core **302** and outer core **304** may be substantially the same as inner core **102** and outer core **104**, respectively. Namely, inner core **302** is a polymer with substantially no filler, which outer core **304** is a polymer with filler. The physical properties and dimensions of inner core **302** and outer core **304** may also be substantially the same as inner core **102** and outer core **104**, respectively. Therefore, core **306** may be substantially the same as core **106**. However, in other embodiments, inner core **302** and outer core **304** may have different dimensions. Namely, the radius of inner core **302** may be different from the radius of inner core **102**, and the thickness of outer core **304** may be different from the thickness of outer core **104**.

Golf ball **300** may have moment of inertia **420**, as described above with respect to moment of inertia **220**.

FIG. **3** shows a third representative golf ball **500**. Golf ball **500** includes inner core **502**, intermediate core **503**, outer core **504**, inner cover layer **510**, and outer cover layer **512**.

Generally, golf ball **500** differs from previous embodiments shown in FIGS. **1** and **2** in that core **506** of golf ball **500** includes three sub-components (inner core **502**, intermediate core **503**, and outer core **504**), as opposed to the two subcomponents (inner core **302** and outer core **304**) that make up core **306**, for example. Core **506** may therefore be referred to as a three-piece core.

In the embodiment show in FIG. **3**, golf ball **500** may have dimensions as shown. First, inner core **502** may have radius **602**. Radius **602** may be smaller than radius **402** of inner core **302** in golf ball **300**. Intermediate core **503** may have thickness **603**, and outer core **504** may have thickness **604**. Generally, core **506** may have radius **606**. Radius **606** may be the same as, or different from, radius **406** of core **306** in golf ball **300**. In one particular embodiment, radius **606** may have a value such that twice radius **606** (i.e. diameter of core **506**) is substantially equal to 1.52 inches. Thickness **610** of inner cover layer **510**, thickness **612** of outer cover layer **512**, and

thickness **608** of cover layer **508**, may be substantially as discussed above with respect to other various embodiments. Golf ball **500** also includes center point **501** and outer surface **505**, the distance between these being radius **600**. In some embodiments, radius **600** may have a value in accordance with USGA rules.

As shown in FIG. **3**, outer core **504** may include fillers **520**. Fillers **520** may be as discussed variously above. In contrast, in golf ball **500**, neither inner core **502** nor intermediate core **503** may include substantially any fillers. This configuration may result in golf ball **500** having moment of inertia **620**. The value of moment of inertia **620** may be as discussed above with respect to moment of inertia **220** of golf ball **100**.

FIG. **4** shows a fourth representative golf ball **700**. Golf ball **700** includes an inner core **702**, an intermediate core **703**, an outer core **704**, an inner cover layer **710**, and an outer cover layer **712**. Golf ball **700** includes core **706** that is also a three-piece core. Golf ball **700** may be referred to as five-piece golf ball, as it includes three-piece core **702** and two cover layers **708**.

In the embodiment show in FIG. **4**, golf ball **700** may have dimensions as shown. First, inner core **702** may have radius **802**. Radius **802** may be the same as or different from radius **602** in golf ball **500**, and (as mentioned above) may be smaller than radius **402** of inner core **302** in golf ball **300**. Intermediate core **703** may have thickness **803**, and outer core **704** may have thickness **804**.

Generally, core **706** may have radius **806**. Radius **806** may be the same as, or different from, radius **406** of core **306** in golf ball **300** as discussed above. In one particular embodiment, radius **806** may have a value such that twice radius **806** (i.e. diameter of core **706**) is substantially equal to 1.52 inches. Thickness **810** of inner cover layer **710**, thickness **812** of outer cover layer **712**, and thickness **808** of cover layer **708**, may be substantially as discussed above with respect to other various embodiments. Golf ball **700** also includes center point **701** and outer surface **705**, the distance between these being radius **800**. In some embodiments, radius **800** may have a value in accordance with USGA rules.

As shown in FIG. **4**, outer core **704** may include fillers **720**. Generally, golf ball **700** differs from golf ball **500** in that intermediate core **703** may include fillers **722**, while intermediate core **503** in golf ball **500** does not substantially include any fillers. In contrast, in golf ball **700**, only inner core **702**, also sometimes referred to as the "center core" because this layer encompasses the center of the golf ball, does not include substantially any fillers. Fillers **720** and **722** may be as discussed variously above. This configuration may result in golf ball **700** having moment of inertia **820**. The value of moment of inertia **820** may be as discussed above with respect to moment of inertia **220** of golf ball **100**.

Generally, if additional layers are provided for any core of any embodiment provided herein, the innermost core layer is free from filler material. Any other core layer may contain filler, though in some embodiments, layers proximate the innermost core layers may also be free from filler material, as long as at least one outer core layer is provided with filler in sufficient amounts as to increase the MOI of the golf ball.

Further embodiments of golf balls in accordance with this disclosure are shown in the below examples.

EXAMPLES

The following example cores labeled A-E, and comparative example cores V-Z, were manufactured and tested as described below.

First, several exemplary inner cores were manufactured and tested as shown in Table 1, as were corresponding comparative examples. In Table 1 and Table 2 below, comparative examples are arranged vertically below the example to which they are most comparable. The examples are made in accordance with the teachings of this disclosure, namely, where the innermost core layer contains no or substantially no filler material while the outer core contains filler material.

TABLE 1

Inner Cores

	Example:				
	A	B	C	D	E
Weight % HNP AD1035	100.0	100.0	100.0	75.0	50.0
Weight % HNP HPF2000	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	50.0
Weight % $BaSO_4$ filler	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total weight (g)	3.545	10.205	16.754	16.737	16.560
Diameter (inches)	0.751	1.071	1.266	1.266	1.261
Specific gravity (g/cm^3)	0.975	0.969	0.963	0.962	0.962
Compression	169.9	140.2	131.9	118.5	110.0
Hardness (Shore D)	40.6	39.5	37.0	39.5	40.6
	Comparative Example:				
	V	W	X	Y	Z
Weight % HNP AD1035	84.7	84.7	84.7	21.2	21.2
Weight % HNP HPF2000	0.0	0.0	0.0	63.5	63.5
Weight % $BaSO_4$ filler	15.3	15.3	15.3	15.3	15.3
Total weight (g)	4.288	11.851	19.406	19.381	19.406
Diameter (inches)	0.751	1.074	1.260	1.261	1.259
Specific gravity (g/cm^3)	1.179	1.114	1.131	1.126	1.132
Compression	161.6	126.6	120.2	106.2	96.3
Hardness (Shore D)	42.0	40.2	39.1	41.0	42.2

The highly neutralized acid polymers AD1035 and HPF2000 are both commercially available from E.I. DuPont de Nemours & Co.

The values of the various physical properties were measured and calculated as discussed herein above, or as is known to a person having ordinary skill in the art of golf ball manufacturing.

Next, an outer core was formed around each inner core to form a completed core. The composition of each outer core is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Outer Cores

	Example:				
	A	B	C	D	E
Weight % HNP AD1035	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Weight % HNP HPF2000	83.0	78.0	69.3	69.3	69.3
Weight % $BaSO_4$ filler	17.0	22.0	30.7	30.7	30.7
	Comparative Example:				
	V	W	X	Y	Z
Weight % HNP AD1035	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Weight % HNP HPF2000	84.7	84.7	84.7	84.7	84.7
Weight % $BaSO_4$ filler	15.3	15.3	15.3	15.3	15.3

The completed cores were measured and tested as shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Total Cores (including inner & outer)					
	Example:				
	A	B	C	D	E
Total weight (g)	32.787	33.255	32.850	33.016	32.938
Diameter (inches)	1.516	1.510	1.521	1.522	1.518
Specific gravity (g/cm^3)	1.097	1.127	1.087	1.092	1.098
Compression	87.0	100.3	112.0	103.4	96.3
Hardness (Shore D)	43.6	43.9	43.3	43.8	43.4
COR Predicted	0.818	0.808	0.799	0.805	0.812
COR Measured	0.823	0.816	0.815	0.823	0.830
$\Delta(COR_M - COR_P)$	0.011	0.008	0.016	0.018	0.018
$\%\,\Delta(COR_M - COR_P)$	1.33%	1.05%	1.96%	2.26%	2.20%
	Comparative Example:				
	V	W	X	Y	Z
Total weight (g)	33.560	32.384	32.958	33.555	33.646
Diameter (inches)	1.517	1.510	1.518	1.518	1.517
Specific gravity (g/cm^3)	1.121	1.096	1.099	1.119	1.123
Compression	83.6	99.0	107.7	96.8	90.0
Hardness (Shore D)	41.6	42.0	42.4	41.2	43.3
COR Predicted	0.818	0.809	0.799	0.806	0.811
COR Measured	0.819	0.809	0.796	0.806	0.814
$\Delta(COR_M - COR_P)$	0.001	0.0	−0.003	0.0	0.003
$\%\,\Delta(COR_M - COR_P)$	0.10%	0.0%	−0.41%	0.0%	0.39%

The "COR Predicted" was calculated according to the following formula:

$$\text{Predicted } COR = \frac{\text{Volume inner}}{\text{Total Volume}} * COR \text{ inner} + \frac{\text{Volume outer}}{\text{Total Volume}} * COR \text{ outer} \quad \text{(Formula 1)}$$

In Formula I, the total volume of the core is the sum of the volume of the inner component and the volume of the outer component. The "COR inner" is determined by measuring the COR of the material making up the inner material, namely by measuring a uniform sphere of the material having a diameter of (for example) 1.55 inches under the same COR testing conditions (for example, 125 ft/sec). The "COR outer" is measured in the same manner with respect to the material making up the outer component.

As shown in the above tables, the Examples showed a greater measured COR than predicted COR. Conversely, the measured COR of the comparative examples did not significantly differ from the predicted COR value.

FIG. **5** shows these results graphical form. Specifically, FIG. **5** shows a scatter plot of the measured COR values against the predicted COR values for each of the examples made in accordance with this disclosure and comparative examples. The "1:1 ratio" line that bisects the graph shows where the measured COR value is equal to the predicted COR value. Data points falling along or substantially near the "1:1 ratio" line are expected according to known COR prediction methods, as discussed above. FIG. **5** shows that the comparative examples fell on or very near this line. In contrast, FIG. **5** visually shows that each of the examples made in accordance with this disclosure had a measured COR value that exceeded the predicted COR value.

While various embodiments of the invention have been described, the description is intended to be exemplary, rather than limiting and it will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art that many more embodiments and implementations are possible that are within the scope of the invention. Accordingly, the invention is not to be restricted except in light of the attached claims and their equivalents. Also, various modifications and changes may be made within the scope of the attached claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A golf ball comprising:

a core comprising

an inner core consisting essentially of a first highly neutralized acid polymer, and

an outer core layer substantially surrounding the inner core and consisting essentially of a second highly neutralized acid polymer composition and a filler; and

a cover layer substantially surrounding the core;

wherein the inner core contains less than about 0.01% by weight of a first filler; and

the outer core layer contains from about 17.0% to about 30.7% by weight of a second filler, and from about 69.3% to about 83.0% by weight of the second highly neutralized acid polymer.

2. The golf ball according to claim **1**, wherein the inner core has an inner core diameter of from about 0.751 inches to about 1.266 inches.

3. The golf ball according to claim **1**, wherein the core has a core diameter of about 1.5 inches.

4. The golf ball according to claim **1**, wherein the inner core has an inner core specific gravity of about 0.96.

5. The golf ball according to claim **1**, wherein the core has a core specific gravity of from about 1.09 to about 1.13.

6. The golf ball according to claim **1**, wherein the inner core has an inner core compression value of from about 110 to about 170.

7. The golf ball according to claim **1**, wherein the core has a core compression value of from about 87 to about 112.

8. The golf ball according to claim **1**, wherein the inner core has an inner core hardness value of from about Shore D 37 to about 41.

9. The golf ball according to claim **1**, wherein the core has a core hardness value of about Shore D 43.

10. A golf ball comprising:

a core, the core comprising an inner core and an outer core;

the inner core consisting essentially of a first highly neutralized acid polymer and less than about 0.01% by weight of a first filler, the inner core having an inner core diameter of from about 0.751 inches to about 1.266 inches, an inner core specific gravity of about 0.96, an inner core compression value of from about 110 to about 170, and an inner core hardness value of from about Shore D 37 to about 41;

wherein the outer core substantially surrounds the inner core, and wherein the outer core consists essentially of from about 69.3% to about 83.0% by weight of a second highly neutralized acid polymer and from about 17.0% to about 30.7% by weight of a second filler, wherein the second filler is $BaSO_4$;

the core having a core diameter of about 1.5 inches, a core specific gravity of from about 1.09 to about 1.13, a core compression value of from about 87 to about 112, and a core hardness value of about Shore D 43; and

a cover layer, wherein the cover layer substantially surrounds the core.

11. The golf ball according to claim **10**, wherein the core has a measured coefficient of restitution that is greater than a predicted coefficient of restitution for the core.

12. The golf ball according to claim **10**, wherein the measured coefficient of restitution of the core is at least about 1% greater than the predicted coefficient of restitution for the core.

13. The golf ball according to claim 10, wherein the measured coefficient of restitution of the core is at least about 2% greater than the predicted coefficient of restitution for the core.

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